

UZBEKISTAN

Duration: **10 days / 9 nights**

Up-to-date dates, prices and included services: moai.ch/uzbekistan

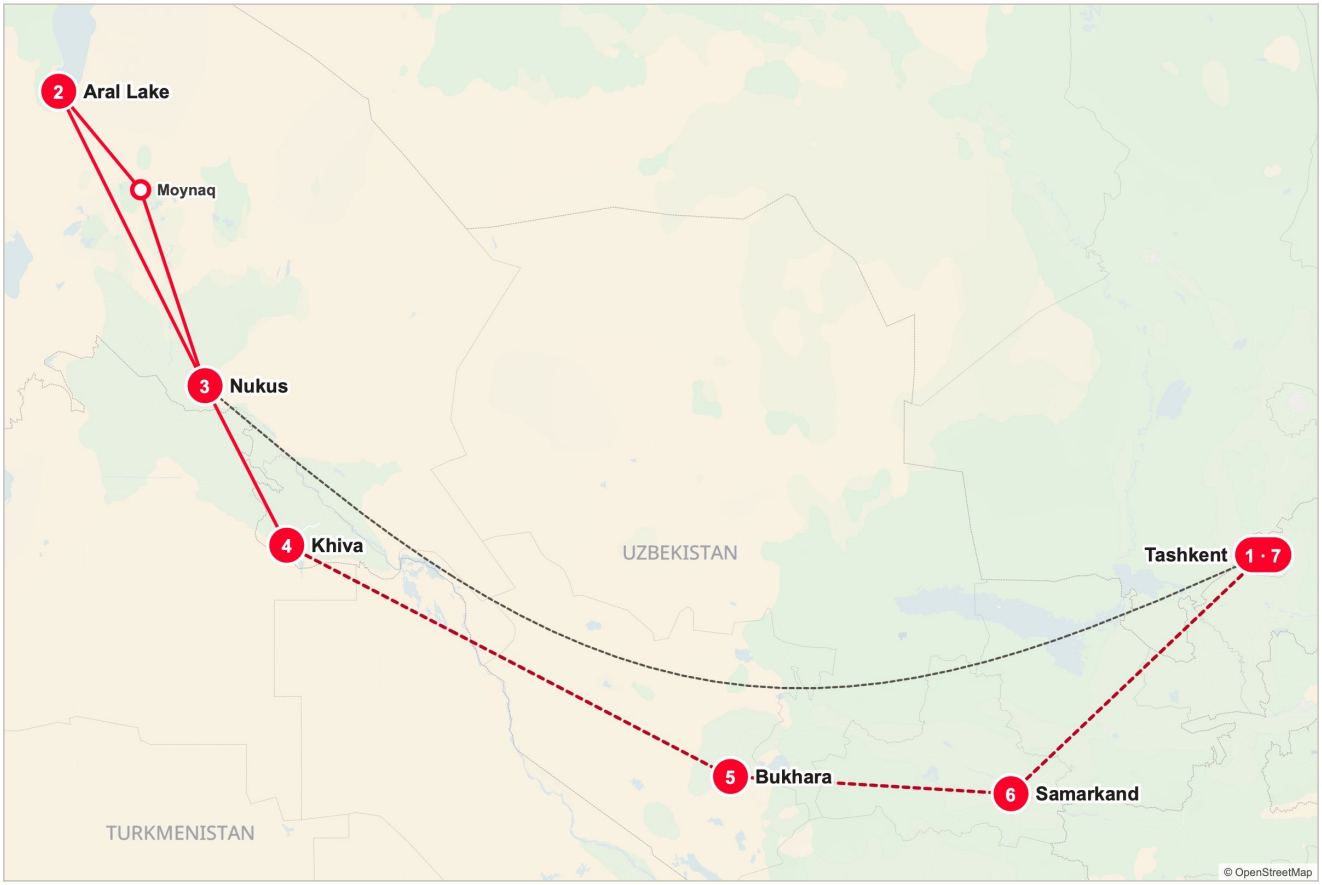
Discover the fascinating Uzbekistan through the lens of your camera on a journey that will reveal the history, culture, and timeless beauty of the region, including the evocative Aral Sea.

From Samarkand to Bukhara and Khiva, you'll be immersed in the magnificence of blue mosques, vibrant markets, and unique local traditions. This journey also includes an exciting visit to the Aral Sea, allowing you to document its historical and environmental impact. Capture desert landscapes, lively bazaars, and millennia-old Islamic architecture, creating images that tell stories of change and resilience. Discover the vastness of this land with an authentic experience and deepen your understanding of the region's history and nature through your photographic art.

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Explore the world, live unique experiences, grow your photography, discover new cultures.

The route



1 **Tashkent**
1 night · Day 2

2 **Aral Lake**
1 night · Day 3

3 **Nukus**
1 night · Day 4

4 **Khiva**
1 night · Day 5

5 **Bukhara**
1 night · Day 6

6 **Samarkand**
2 nights · Days 7–8

7 **Tashkent**
2 nights · Days 9–10

Itinerary

Day 1 – Departure

Evening flight from Milano with a stopover in Istanbul or other flights arriving Saturday morning in Tashkent.

Night-time flight.

Overnight: Night flight

Day 2 – Tashkent

Arrival at Tashkent International Airport in the morning. Immigration formalities, passport control, and baggage retrieval take about an hour.

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Throughout the day, visit the main points of interest in the capital: the **Roman Catholic church**, the **Evangelical Lutheran church**, the **Hazrati Imam complex**, located in the old city within the districts with the old clay and daub houses that suffered the 1966 earthquake, where you'll also find the **Kaffal Shoshi mausoleum**; the **medieval Kukeldash madrasa** and the nearby **Chorsu bazaar**, the most famous market in Tashkent, impressive both inside and out, its enormous aquamarine shell framing the daily hustle of thousands of shoppers searching for the freshest ingredients. The day also includes a visit to the **Soviet-era metro** and the **Uzbekistan Hotel**, one of the iconic brutalist-style buildings.

Overnight: Hotel · Meal included: breakfast

Day 3 – Tashkent – Nukus – Aral Sea

Early morning transfer to the local airport, flight to **Nukus** with arrival in the morning and transfer to the hotel.

Departure for the **Aral Sea**, once the **world's fourth-largest lake**, fed by the abundant waters of the **Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers**. In the **1960s and 1970s**, **agriculture expanded**, and Uzbekistan became a major cotton exporter. The downside of this development was the **drying up of the Aral Sea** and the extreme salinity of the soil and water, leading to numerous **environmental and demographic issues in the region**.

Arrival in **Muynak**, the former port of the Aral Sea in northern **Karakalpakstan**. Here, you'll find the **shipwrecks**, silent witnesses to the Aral Sea tragedy. Lunch at a local bar.

In the afternoon, continue towards the yurt camp, stopping for photography on the **Ustyurt Plateau** to admire the stunning landscape.

Arrival at the yurt camp by the end of the day. Barbecue dinner around the fire.

Overnight: Yurt (4-6 people per tent), the traditional Mongolian nomadic tent · Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 4 – Aral Sea – Nukus

We recommend waking up at **dawn to capture stunning photos of the Aral Sea**. Breakfast at the yurt camp. Return to **Nukus**, with a few stops along the way, the first being the **Mizdakhan necropolis**, an ancient cemetery near the ruins of the Gaur Kala fortress (4th–3rd century BCE). Continue to **Gaur Kala** (*pagan fortress*), once a **Zoroastrian city** with a citadel, a fire altar, and a large nearby cemetery. Even after the Arab invasion and the spread of Islam, the city remained inhabited until the 14th century, and people continued to bury their loved ones in Mizdahan, considering the place sacred.

Lunch at a local bar. Arrival in Nukus and transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Nukus · Meal included: breakfast

Day 5 – Nukus – Khiva

Morning excursion to the **Savitsky Museum** (State Museum of Arts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan), which houses a unique collection of **antiquities from Khorezm** (Khorezm) and **Karakalpakstan**, **Uzbek artworks**, and the second-largest collection of **Russian avant-garde art** after the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg. The museum's founder, Igor Savitsky, dedicated his life to collecting the finest works by contemporary artists. In the 1970s, this was a bold act, as these collections were considered anti-Soviet propaganda.

Transfer to **Khiva**, with stops along the way at **Ayaz Kala** and **Toprak Kala**, Kushan-era fortresses of ancient Khorezm, once **powerful frontier fortresses** protecting inhabitants from nomadic tribal raids. The fortresses were built in the 4th–7th centuries BCE when Khorezm gained independence. They are located close to each other on the hills, and visitors can take a short tour of the monumental fortresses, now partially covered in

sand. Arrival in Khiva and transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Khiva · Meal included: breakfast

Day 6 – Khiva - Bukhara

Departure to explore the **inner city of Khiva**, a true open-air museum city.

Our tour includes visits to **Ata-Darvaza**, the main gate of **Itchan Kala**, the fortified citadel of Khiva, and the massive **Kuhna Ark fortress**; the **madrassas** of **Muhammad Rahim Khan** and **Muhammed Aminhan**; continuing with the **Kalta Minor minaret**, the **Allakuli Khan madrasa**, and the **Tosh-hovli palace**, home to the harem of 40 concubines.

The tour continues with the **caravanserai and Tim** (covered bazaar) of **Allakuli Khan**, the **Pahlavon Mahmud gates**, the **mausoleums** of **Sayid Alauddin** and **Pahlavon Mahmud**, the **minaret and madrasa of Islam Khodja**, and the **Jami mosque and minaret**.

Transfer to Urgench railway station. Overnight train to Bukhara, arriving just after midnight, followed by transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Bukhara · Meal included: breakfast

Day 7 – Bukhara - Samarkand

We begin our walking tour of the **old city of Bukhara**, which has preserved its medieval atmosphere thanks to its narrow streets, stunning monuments, and picturesque markets. Our tour starts at the **Ismail Samani mausoleum**; we then proceed to the **Chashma Ayub mausoleum** and the massive **Ark of Bukhara**, which, since ancient times, was the fortified residence of Bukhara's rulers, housing everything from palaces and temples to barracks, offices, a mint, warehouses, workshops, stables, an arsenal, and even a prison; to reach the **Bolo Hauz mosque**.

In the afternoon, visit the **Po-i-Kalyan religious complex**, which includes the **Mir-i Arab madrasa** (1535), the **Juma mosque** (1514), and the **Kalon minaret**, built by the Karakhanid ruler Arslan Khan in 1127, one of the city's symbols.

Shopping lovers will enjoy strolling among the merchant's domes, money changers, and jewellers, and a walk through the **Tim Abdul Khan covered market** (16th century). The next stop is the **Maghoki-Attar mosque** (9th century), one of the oldest surviving mosques in Central Asia (dating back to the 9th century, rebuilt in the 16th century), built on the site of a fire-worshippers' temple; the portals of the building are a true masterpiece of architectural decoration. Walk through the **Jewish quarter** and visit the **synagogue**. We conclude the day at **Lyab-i Huaz**, considered the heart of the Old City, meaning 'complex near the pool' (*howz* is the central pool in Persian architecture). This complex has three monumental structures: the **Kukeldash madrasa** (16th century), built by Abdullah II, once the largest Islamic school in Central Asia; the **Nadir Devanbegi madrasa** (16th century), originally a caravanserai, rebuilt by order of the ruler Imam Quli Khan and converted into a madrasa; and the **Nadir Divanbegi Khanqah** (16th century) and the famous **statue of Nasreddin Khoja**, a legendary figure in Islamic folklore from the Balkans to China.

In the mid-afternoon, transfer to the station to catch the high-speed train to Samarkand. Arrival at 17:30 in Samarkand and transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Samarkand · Meal included: breakfast

Day 8 – Samarkand

In the morning, we explore **Samarkand**, the Pearl of the East and a crossroads of the **Silk Road**, featuring the famous **Registan Square**, the heart of ancient Samarkand, composed of three magnificently decorated madrassas (Ulugh Beg, Sher-Dor, and Tilya Kori). The tour continues with a visit to the **Gur-e Amir mausoleum**, where **Tamerlane** and his descendants are buried, with its **blue-ribbed dome** and richly decorated interiors, housing the **world's largest piece of jade**.

In the afternoon, we visit the remains of the **Ulugh Beg Observatory**, built in the 15th century, and its enormous sextant, which allowed our ancestors to observe the stars and create a star map. The day concludes with a visit to the **mausoleum of Saint Daniel**, a great prophet and protector of the city. It is a pilgrimage site for three world religions.

Overnight: Hotel in Samarkand · Meal included: breakfast

Day 9 – Samarkand

We continue our fascinating tour of Samarkand with a visit to the **Shakh-i-Zinda necropolis**, known as the 'city of the dead' and made up of numerous mausoleums, the oldest of which date back to the 11th century, a burial site for royalty and nobles, its construction entrusted to the finest architects of the past. Excursion to the **Bibi-Khanym Mosque** (built between 1399 and 1404), one of the most famous architectural attractions of Central Asia dating back to the era of Tamerlane. We then head to the **Siyob Bazaar**, the oldest bazaar in Samarkand, with its unique atmosphere and wide range of products.

Transfer to the station to catch the high-speed train to Tashkent, arriving in the early evening, followed by transfer to your hotel.

Overnight: Hotel in Tashkent · Meal included: breakfast

Day 10 – Return

Morning transfer to Tashkent Airport.

Return flight with a stopover in Istanbul, arriving in Milano in the late afternoon.

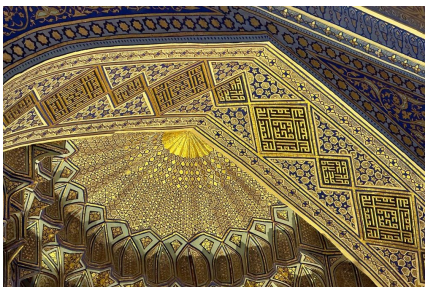
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NOTES

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